

Nov 7, 2003: House Passes Final 2004 Defense Bill

CONGRESSMAN EVERETT ANNOUNCES PASSAGE OF FINAL 2004 DEFENSE BILL

New Defense Budget Continues to Play Positive Role in Southeast Alabama Economy

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the \$401.3 billion 2004 National Defense Authorization Act Conference Report (HR 1588) that includes \$500 million in defense spending impacting Southeast Alabama, Congressman Terry Everett, R-Rehobeth, announced Friday.

The House passage of the Defense Authorization Act follows the earlier passage of the Defense Appropriations Act on September 24th. The two annual budget bills merge to shape the Pentagon spending blueprint for the new year. The result of today's vote is a final picture of the defense budget for 2004 and its impact on Southeast Alabama.

As a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Everett was involved in shaping the new defense budget both locally and nationally. House Armed Services Committee chairman, Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-CA., observed: "I've seen firsthand Terry's steadfast dedication to Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base and Fort Rucker as well as defense industries in Southeast Alabama. Residents of the Second District are fortunate to have such an effective national security advocate in Congress."

For 2004, Southeast Alabama defense programs, including training and testing at Fort Rucker, new construction at Maxwell-Gunter, new Blackhawk helicopter production at Tallassee, and testing of a new anti-missile system to be partially produced at Pike County's Lockheed Martin should see positive impacts.

Fort Rucker:

"As Fort Rucker is set to begin Flight School XXI for Army aviators, I was pleased to secure \$2.5 million in additional funds to ensure the training program has the resources to adequately prepare our future Army helicopter pilots," Everett said.

"Fort Rucker will also be benefited by the defense bill's \$1.1 billion earmark for further research and development of the RAH-66 Comanche helicopter. Training for the Comanche, once in production, will take place at Fort Rucker."

Maxwell-Gunter - Montgomery:

"Particular good news is the approval of \$12.6 million in the new defense bill for an Integrated Operational Support Facility at Gunter annex of Maxwell Air Force Base," Everett said. "This funding, which I specially requested, is needed to upgrade and consolidate the Standards Systems Group computer and communications operations by bringing them together in a single modern facility. I am pleased that the Administration's budget request for \$13.4 million for Phase III of the Squadron Officer School Dormitory at Maxwell was also approved." [Note the Maxwell-Gunter Funding was voted on separately as part of the Military Construction Appropriations Act which passed the House Wednesday]

Lockheed Martin - Pike County:

"The workers at Pike County's Lockheed Martin continue to be heroes in the war against terror for their role in the assembly of high tech smart weapons systems," Everett noted. "Their work is vital in our military success and the new defense budget relies on their efforts by ordering \$253 million in Javelin, Hellfire, and JASSM missile systems which are partially produced here in Southeast Alabama."

GKN Aerospace - Tallassee & Montgomery:

"GKN Aerospace in Tallassee and Montgomery is a key subcontractor for the military's Blackhawk helicopter line. I was pleased to support the Administration's request for \$139 million for the production of 10 new H-60 Blackhawks. I secured an additional \$70.5 million to produce 7 more H-60's bringing the total to \$209.5 million for 17 aircraft for 2004. Composite parts for these H-60's will be made and assembled in Central Alabama."

Miltope - Montgomery:

"Another Montgomery area defense company will play a major role in supplying our men and woman in uniform with high tech support," Everett noted. "Miltope will benefit from the defense budget's purchase of \$17.8 million in TSC-750 battlefield-ready laptop computers. I was able to add another \$6.8 million to this purchase amount to bring it to \$24.6 million, ensuring an adequate supply of these essential laptops for our military."

JKM - Eufaula:

"For 2004, I secured \$8 million in the new defense budget for the remanufacture of the Fleet Phalanx Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) for the Navy. The CIWS Bock 1B upgrade will better protect our naval vessels from close-in anti-cruise missiles as well as terrorist threats presented by small boats and low flying aircraft. This work will be performed in part at JKM in Eufaula."

Dynamic Research - Enterprise:

"So that the Army can make future battlefield operations safer for its personnel, I have secured \$1 million for Ground Systems Team Training to be provided by Dynamic's Research of Enterprise," Everett concluded.